watch descried the enemy sailing southeasterly, just north of Cape Trafalgar. The French fleet, simultaneously descrying the English, at once turned northward so as to be ready for retreat toward Cadiz; and Ville-neuve, skilful but ever despondent, drew up his ships for battle in two long lines parallel with the shore, those of the rear covering the spaces between those of the first, so as to make the whole virtually a single compact curved line, concave toward the enemy, and therefore prepared to deliver a cross-fire.

It was a bright morning, with a light westerly breeze, but a heavy ocean swell, as the British, with the advantage of the wind, slowly advanced in two columns, one led by Nelson in the Victory, the other by Collingwood in the Royal Sovereign. All was silent when at the appointed moment the famous signal fluttered from the flag-ship: "England expects every man to do his duty." Responsive cheers burst from ship after ship, and the French admiral murmured, "All is lost!" Nelson had given a stirring order: "In case signals cannot be seen or clearly understood, no captain can do wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy." Villeneuve's was scarcely less so: "Any captain not under fire is not at his post, and a signal to recall him would be a disgrace." It was a splendid audacity on Nelson's part which, fearing lest the light wind might make an engagement impossible, offered each of his ships in two attacking columns, one after the other, to the fire of a whole fleet.

Collingwood's line — the southern — came into action first, just at noon, and broke through the enemy's ranks, as was expected; but although this was by pre-arrangement with Nelson, yet the Royal Sovereign, having outsailed her consorts, went too far, and was isolated for twenty minutes, being exposed to the fire of all the enemy's ships which could reach her, and was nearly